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Mrs. Kim Diamond, Development Director  
Trumark Urban  
90 New Montgomery Street, Suite 750  
San Francisco, CA 94105

September 30, 2014

**Re: 1545 Pine Street – Mixed-use Development**

Dear Mrs. Diamond,

Thank you for bringing your proposed mixed-use development at 1545 Pine Street to the San Francisco Housing Action Coalition's (SFHAC) Project Review Committee on September 24, 2014. Following review and discussion, our Committee believes the project has merit and will make a substantial contribution to SFHAC's mission of increasing the supply of well-designed, well-located housing that meets the needs of both present and future San Franciscans. This letter reflects our support for your project, but includes recommendations made by our members for modest improvements. We believe, however, that in general this project embodies the best principals of urban design.

Please see also see our report card, which grades your proposal according to our guidelines. We have attached a copy of our project review criteria to this letter for your reference.

**Project Description**

Your development proposes 103 for-sale homes with ground-floor retail above a two-story, subterranean parking garage with 82 spaces.

**Land Use**

Several vacant commercial buildings currently occupy the site. The parcel is underutilized and Austin Alley is unwelcoming to pedestrians and neighbors. Your proposal will not only bring badly needed housing, but will enliven the Lower Polk Neighborhood and activate Pine Street and the alley.

**Density**

Your project proposes an appropriate mix of units, ranging from junior one-bedrooms to three-bedroom homes. The site is split between two different zoning districts. Our Committee believes your project utilizes the building envelope effectively while respecting the neighboring buildings. To address the concerns of the adjacent building, your development is stepped back from their property line to create more space and allow for more sunlight.

**Affordability**

The SFHAC commends you for providing 12 units (12 percent) of below-market-rate homes on site.

### **Parking and Alternative Transportation**

This is the one area that raised some concern from our Committee. While your project is in close proximity to several Muni bus lines that run along Van Ness Avenue and Polk Street, as well as the busy Polk Street bicycle corridor, your project proposes a high parking ratio of 0.8:1 spaces per unit. We rarely see new developments that propose ratios above 0.75:1 and encourage you to consider ways to reduce the number of parking spaces.

We applaud your decision to provide two on-site car share spaces and to exceed the amount of required bicycle parking spaces with 112 Class I and 8 Class II spaces.

### **Preservation**

There are no structures of significant cultural or historic merit on or near the site that would be affected by your development.

### **Urban Design**

Our Committee was very supportive of the overall design of your project and commends you for your efforts to activate the streets, both along Polk Street and Austin Alley. Your plan to improve the alley with landscaping and street lights will make this an attractive destination to neighborhood residents. The proposal includes various features along the Pine Street frontage that will enliven the area, including retail space, street furniture and planter beds. You raised the idea of treating the sidewalk pavement with a design pattern to make it more attractive. All of these features promote good urbanism.

The rooftop will provide common outdoor space for the building's residents. As mentioned earlier, our members appreciated how you thoughtfully stepped back a portion of your building to address concerns from adjacent retail neighbors.

### **Environmental Features**

The SFHAC supports all possible measures to enhance your building's energy efficiency and water conservation. In the past, Trumark Urban has shown a strong commitment in this regard and we are confident this project will be no exception.

### **Community Input**

As has been the case with Trumark's past proposals we have reviewed, the community outreach for 1545 Pine Street has been exceptional. You received unanimous support from the Lower Polk Neighborhood Association by responding to and incorporating their feedback. This includes focusing on street activation, improving Austin Alley and stepping

back parts of the building that initially fronted the property line. You also donated space to the Lower Polk Central Business District, which will be used as art space.

Thank you for submitting this project to the SFHAC Project Review Committee. We are pleased to endorse this project without reservation. Please keep us abreast of any changes or updates and let us know how we may be of assistance.

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Sincerely yours,

Tim Colen, Executive Director

CC: SF Planning Commission

## **SFHAC Project Review Criteria**

**Land Use:** Housing should be an appropriate use of the site given the context of the adjacent properties and the surrounding neighborhood and should enhance neighborhood livability.

**Density:** The project should take full advantage of the maximum unit density and/or building envelope, allowable under the zoning rules.

**Affordability:** The need for affordable housing, including middle income (120-150 of Area Median Income) housing, is a critical problem and SFHAC gives special support to projects that propose creative ways to expand or improve unit affordability beyond the legally mandated requirements.

**Parking and Alternative Transportation:** SFHAC expects the projects it endorses to include creative strategies to reduce the need for parking, such as ample bicycle storage, provision of space for car-share vehicles on-site or nearby, un-bundling parking cost from residential unit cost, and measures to incentivize transit use. Proximity to transit should result in less need for parking.

In districts with an as-of-right maximum and discretionary approval up to an absolute maximum, SFHAC will support parking exceeding the as-of-right maximum only to the extent the Code criteria for doing so are clearly met. In districts where the minimum parking requirement is one parking space per residential unit (1:1), the SFHAC will not, except in extraordinary circumstances, support a project with parking in excess of that amount.

**Preservation:** If there are structures of significant historic or cultural merit on the site, their retention and/or incorporation into the project consistent with historic preservation standards is encouraged. If such structures are to be demolished, there should be compelling reasons for doing so.

**Urban Design:** The project should promote principles of good urban design: Where appropriate, contextual design that is compatible with the adjacent streetscape and existing neighborhood character while at the same time utilizing allowable unit density; pleasant and functional private and/or common open space; pedestrian, bicycle and transit friendly site planning; and design treatments that protect and enhance the pedestrian realm, with curb cuts minimized and active ground floor uses provided.

Projects with a substantial number of multiple bedroom units should consider including features that will make the project friendly to families with children.

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**Environmental Features:** SFHAC is particularly supportive of projects that employ substantial and/or innovative measures that will enhance their sustainability and reduce their carbon footprint.

**Community Input:** Projects for which the developer has made a good faith effort to communicate to the community and to address legitimate neighborhood concerns, without sacrificing SFHAC's objectives, will receive more SFHAC support.